

two conspicuous eye-like patches light brown in colour. Two pairs of round closely fitting markings present below them. Epigyne and internal genitalia detailed in Fig. 3 (n – o).

**Distribution:** India, Kerala state. Observed in different parts of Ernakulam, Trichur (=Thrissur), Kozhikode and Wayanad districts of Kerala from sea level to an altitude of about 1067 m above msl.

**Remarks:** Blue iridescent colour of the setae fade within a very short time when specimens are preserved in alcohol. Specimens can be satisfactorily preserved in glycerine without losing colour even after one year. However, problem of shrinkage and chance of fungal attack is more while stored in glycerine. Setae in characteristic pattern present only in young and mature young adults. In “older adults” and roughly handled specimens this pattern may be lost.

**Field characters:** *Thiania bhamoensis* prefers plants with comparatively broad leaves. Specimens were collected from garden plants and wild bushes and even from tall trees. Unlike many other Salticids, it does not construct silk retreats, but makes a “purse-like hiding place” by sticking together two leaves with few broad vertical silk bands. Use of silk in nest construction is limited to making of these bands. Number of bands depends upon the size of the nest, which varies according to the size of the animal. This peculiar way of nest construction is perhaps characteristic of the genus *Thiania* and *T. bhamoensis* is similar in this respect to an unidentified species of *Thiania* from Malaysia as reported by Jackson in 1986.

*T. bhamoensis* has the habit of spending most of its time in the ‘nest’. It usually remains hiding in the ‘nest’ with anterior parts projecting out through one of the openings of the ‘nest’. In addition to protection from an intruding enemy this may also help to catch some passing insects. If disturbed while in the nest, at first the spider tries to conceal itself

within the nest, then jumps out and leaps away. Sometimes it comes out of the nest for active hunting. Mosquitoes and flies are the preferred prey. When alarmed it quickly moves to the lower surface of the leaf to hide. The spider also uses the ‘nest’ as its night shelter. If nothing happens to the ‘nest’, it is used continuously for days.

*Thiania bhamoensis* uses the same ‘nest’ for oviposition and brooding. Egg sac is constructed using thick layers of silk within the ‘nest’. Breeding period is usually September to November. Sitting over the egg sac within the ‘nest’, the mother spider guards the eggs and later the young ones until they come out of the ‘nest’. After starting an independent life the young ones construct separate ‘nests’. The young resemble the adult in colouration. They can be observed in fairly good numbers from January to March.

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#### 23. FIRST RECORD OF A WIND-SCORPION (ARACHNIDA: SOLIFUGAE) FROM SEONI DISTRICT, MADHYA PRADESH

Wind-scorpions are curious creatures belonging to Order Solifugae, Class Arachnida. They resemble spiders in appearance and are also known as false-spiders, sun-spiders, and camel-spiders. They can be easily recognised by their

exceptionally well-developed chelicerae forming two powerful pincers, two large eyes on an ocular tubercle, very long pedipalps, extremely hairy body, and segmented abdomen. The first pair of legs is stretched out in front and used as

tactile organ, while the remaining legs are used in locomotion (Levi and Lewi 1968). Wind-scorpions are nocturnal, exclusively carnivorous, generally preying on insects, but they also kill and eat larger animals, such as scorpions and small lizards. Principally they are desert forms, but in India they are also found in forests (Anon. 1991). A review of the literature reveals that wind-scorpions are little known in the Indian Fauna. Pocock (1900) recorded 17 species of Solifugae in 3 genera under 2 families, including three species from Central India, namely *Galeodes fatalis* Lichtenstein & Herbst, *Galeodes orientalis* Stoliczka and *Galeodes indicus* Pocock. According to Pocock (1900), *Galeodes fatalis* is known from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, North India, Bengal and Kathiawar; *Galeodes orientalis* from Gwalior, Kathiawar, Birbhum, Delhi, Bihar and Uttaranchal, while *Galeodes indicus* is known from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh, Gaya in Bihar and Thane in Maharashtra. Unfortunately, since Pocock (1900), there has been no major work on the Indian Solifugae (Anon. 1991).

While identifying some arachnid fauna collected by a survey team of Zoological Survey of India, Jabalpur, from Seoni district, we came across an interesting juvenile specimen of the genus *Galeodes*, an account of which is given as follows:

**Family: Galeodidae**

**Genus: *Galeodes* Olivier**

***Galeodes* sp.**

**Material examined:** 1 ex. (immature); loc. Chewarighat, Seoni district, Madhya Pradesh; coll. K. Chandra, 6.vi.2001 (Regn. No. A/949).

**Measurements (in mm):** Total length 8; width of head 2; length of palpus 10; length of I leg 5, II leg 4.5, III leg 8.5, IV leg 13.

**Colour:** Cephalothorax brownish, legs light brown, abdomen blackish-brown.

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#### 24. OCCURRENCE OF THE MUD CRAB *SCYLLA TRANQUEBARICA* (FABRICIUS) (BRACHYURA: PORTUNIDAE) FROM THE WEST COAST OF INDIA

A study of commercially important crab species of north Konkan zone, especially from ponds in Uran area of Raigad district of coastal Maharashtra revealed that, besides *Scylla serrata*, *S. tranquebarica* was also reared in the ponds. The study thus revealed that *S. tranquebarica*, which was so far reported only from India's east coast, also occurs on the west coast.

The mud crab *Scylla serrata* (Forsk.) also known as mangrove swimming crab, is one of the commonest, large and widely distributed crabs in the Indo-Pacific region. Due to its large size, abundant availability close to the shore (being an estuarine species) and fetching a high price, a good deal of attention has been paid to its taxonomy and fishery (Sakai 1976; Kathirval and Srinivasagam 1992; Fuseya and Watanabe 1995; Watanabe and Fuseya 1997).

There has been confusion as to whether *S. serrata* is a

complex of several species/ subspecies, or if these are morphological variations of a single species. Earlier authors preferred to use a single name for the species, namely *S. serrata*. However, from around 1949 onwards taxonomists (Estampador 1949; Serene 1952; Joel and Sanjeeva Raj 1983; Oshiro 1988; Fuseya and Watanabe 1996; Overton *et al.* 1997; Keenan *et al.* 1998; Fuseya 1998) have recognized two to four different species or subspecies. In contrast, Stephenson and Campbell (1960) attributed their morphological variations to environmental differences. Fushimi and Watanabe (2001) have reviewed the problems in species identification of crabs of the genus *Scylla*.

The use of popular names for *S. serrata* is also confusing. The common usage of "mud crabs" is rather unfortunate, as there are so many crabs – both walking and swimming – that live in mudflats. Even the term "mangrove